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Message Text

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42
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AEC-11 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10

IO-14 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 FEA-02 USIE-00

PM-07 SP-03 SS-20 DODE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00

INRE-00 EA-11 DRC-01 /162 W
---------- 080020
O 181655Z MAY 74
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1537
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 6603

LONDON FOR AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN
SUBJECT: INDIAN NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

1. DESPITE INFORMATION GIVEN TO US TO CONTRARY BY PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU, PRESS TICKERS REPORT THAT H.R. SETHAN, CHAIRMAN OF THE INDIAN ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION HELD "IMPROMPTU" PRESS CONFERENCE ON EVENING OF MAY 18.

2. ACCORDING TO TICKERS SETHNA SAID THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS PURELY A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT. HE SAID THE EXPERIMENT WAS CARRIED OUT AT A DEPTH OF APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED METERS AT 0805 AM MAY 18. AFTER THE DEVICE WAS SET OFF, AN AERIAL SURVEY WAS UNDERTAKEN WITHIN HALF AN HOUR AT A HEIGHT OF THIRTY METERS AND THERE WAS NO SIGNIFICANT RADIO ACTIVITY ABOVE THE NORMAL.SETHAN SAID THAT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SAND HAD COME UP ALONG WITH THE EARTH AND THE WIND WAS BLOWING SOUTHWEST. BY ABOUT 9:30 OR TEN AM, TEAMS REACHED A DISTANCE OF ABOUT TWO HUNDRED METERS FROM THE ACTUAL SITE AND ONE COULD
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SAY THERE WAS NIL VENTING, ACCORDING TO THE WIRE SERVICE

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STORIES.

3. HE ANNOUNCED THE MAGNITUDE OF THE EXPLOSION WAS BETWEEN
TEN AND FIFTEEN KILOTONS. THE ANALYSIS HURRIEDLY MADE
THIS MORNING WAS ONLY PRELIMINARY IT WOULD TAKE SOME TIME
BEFORE SOME DEFINITE CONCLUSIONS COULD BE DRAWN.
TURNING TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN HE SAID THAT SEISMIC DEVICES
AROUND THE WORLD SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DETECT IT.

4. IN REPLY TO QUESTIONS, SETHAN SAID THE EXPERIMENT WAS
SUCCESSFUL. IT WAS CARRIED OUT TO FIND OUT (1) THE
CRATERING EFFECT AND (2) TO SEE HOW FAR IT HELPED
CRUSH THE ROCK IN THE SUB STRUCTURE OF THE EARTH.
SETHNA CLAIMED THAT THERE WAS NO RADIO ACTIVITY, THE
STORIES SAID.

5. SETHNA MAINTAINED THAT ALTHOUGH THE EXPLOSION HAD
THROWN SOME ROCKS AND SAND OVER THE SURFACE, THESE WERE
CHASED BY A HELICOPTER FOR TEN TO FIFTEEN KILOMETERS,
BUT NO SIGNIFICANT RADIOACTIVITY ABOVE THE
NORMAL BACKGROUND WAS DETECTED.
IT WAS A TOTALLY CONTAINED EXPLOSION.

6. IN REGARD TO THE EQUIPMENT TO STUDY THE EFFECTS, HE SAID,
THREE MICRO BAROGRAPHS WERE LOCATED AT DISTANCES FOR FOUR
HUNDRED METERS, THREE HUNDRED METERS AND ONE NEAR
THE SITE. SOME SEISMIC INSTRUMENTS WERE ALSO LOCATED
AROUND THE SITE.
THE TEAMS COULD NOT GET CLOSER THAN HUNDRED
METERS OF THE SITE BECAUSE OF FISSURES CAUSED BY THE EXPLOSION.

7. DETAILS OF THE EVENT WERE GIVEN TO INDIAN AND FOREIGN
NEWSMEN IN THE EVENING BY SETHAN AND DR. R. RAMANNA, DIRECTOR
OF THE BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTER,
BOTH OF WHOM "HAD RUSHED FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL AREA BY
PLANE," ACCORDING TO WIRE SERVICE ACCOUNTS.
SCHNEIDER

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Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 18 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
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Disposition Action: n/a
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Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Document Unique ID: 00
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Executive Order: N/A
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